

Berkshire Ornithological Club

AGM 2012/3 - Chairman's Report

1 Membership

During the year, membership grew from 311 to 328, representing 42 new memberships less 25 resignations or memberships lapsing.

We are grateful to Iain Oldcorn who has kindly volunteered and taken over from Heidi Bailey as membership secretary.

2 Meetings and Field trips

Once again there was a good programme of 11 talks, the photographic competition, a Christmas social evening and an identification workshop. Highlights of the talks were presentations from Ian Newton, David Lindo and Nicholas Watts. Attendance was on average 55 members and 5 guests, a little more than the previous two years but about average for the last 8 years.

Three coach trips planned, but one to Elmley was cancelled due to lack of bookings. The other two (Dungeness and the Rutland Bird Fair) were well supported. In addition members were able to participate in four coach trips organised by the East Berks and Wokingham and Bracknell RSPB members' groups.

Six mid-week walks and 5 full day car trips were also planned, although one was cancelled due to the weather. Attendance for each varied from 5 to 15. There was a successful weekend trip to Norfolk, two more "Raptormania" trips to Spain and a trip to Poland, a new destination.

Thanks are due to Ray Reedman for putting together the indoor programme, to Ray and the other leaders of field trips, to Colin Wilson for once again organising the photographic competition and Ken White for organising the Spanish trips.

3 Publicity, Publications and Communications

During the year the club made its first venture into the world of social media, with the establishment of a Facebook page. We are grateful to Becky Thomas for her work in setting it up.

The new edition of The Birds of Berkshire, incorporating the results of the 2007-11 Bird Atlas survey made substantial progress. Publication is expected early in December 2013. Thanks to the efforts to raise funds led by Brian Clews the project is already in surplus, so the project should produce a substantial boost to club's conservation fund, to be spent on bird-focussed conservation work in the county.

Perhaps because efforts have been concentrated on the Birds of Berkshire, no report appeared during the year. It is hoped that the reports for 2009 and 2010 will appear early in 2014.

4 Conservation

During the year the committee has decided to establish a new conservation committee to deal with conservation matters, which is due to meet for the first time in November. We are grateful to the outgoing conservation officer John Lerpiniere for his hard work and help over the years.

Work has continued on a number of projects advising or assisting in matters relating to habitat management. Ken Moore has continued to liaise with managers of gravel extraction sites in the Kennet Valley, and Renton Righelato has been working with the owner of a substantial woodland near Inkpen.

During the year the conservation fund made one grant, to the Pang Valley Barn Owl group for Barn Owl nestboxes.

5 General

This report marks the end of my year as acting chair of the Club. I am grateful to the committee and officers for all their hard work and support. Particular thanks are due to Mike Turton for his efficient behind the scenes contribution as Hon Secretary and Bill Nicoll for taking on the responsible and important role of club treasurer. We have plenty to look forward to in the current year, with the publication of the new atlas and avifauna and the prospect of a substantial boost to the conservation fund enabling the club to boost its work in conservation locally.